

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-33 (canceled).

34 (currently amended). A method of tournament gaming, comprising:

providing a plurality of gaming devices adapted for tournament play and configured to play at least one game of chance at variable rates of play;

initiating a tournament game of chance on at least one gaming device of the plurality of gaming devices; and

playing the tournament game of chance at a first permitted rate of play as permitted by gaming device circuitry, relative to which the actual rate of game play may vary, and changing the permitted rate of play to a second permitted rate of play as permitted by gaming device circuitry, relative to which the actual rate of game play may vary, automatically in response to at least one selected game outcome of the at least one game of chance.

35 (currently amended). The method of claim 34, wherein the second permitted rate of play reverts to the first permitted rate of play automatically in response to occurrence of at least one other selected game outcome.

Claims 36-37 (canceled).

38 (currently amended). The method of claim 34, wherein the second permitted rate of play reverts to the first permitted rate of play automatically in response to expiration of a predetermined interval of time.

Claims 39-54 (canceled).

55 (previously presented). The method of claim 34, wherein the second permitted rate of play reverts to the first permitted rate of play after a number of plays are initiated on the at least one gaming device.

56 (previously presented). The method of claim 34, wherein the second permitted rate of play is faster than the first permitted rate of play.

57 (previously presented). The method of claim 34, wherein the second permitted rate of play is slower than the first permitted rate of play.

58 (previously presented). The method of claim 34, wherein the at least one game of chance is at least one of a reel-type game and a card game.

59 (previously presented). The method of claim 34, comprising automatically initiating play at the second permitted rate of play irrespective of player input when the second permitted rate of play is permitted.

60 (previously presented). The method of claim 34, comprising playing the tournament game of chance at a rate of play no less than an automated minimum rate of play.

61 (previously presented). The method of claim 60, comprising playing the tournament game of chance at a rate of play no less than an automated minimum rate of play when a player does not initiate play of the tournament game of chance within a predetermined time interval.

62 (previously presented). The method of claim 61, wherein the automated minimum rate of play comprises a percentage of a standard rate of play of the at least one game of chance.

63 (previously presented). The method of claim 62, comprising sampling rates of play of the at least one game of chance on at least some of the plurality of gaming devices and deriving the standard rate of play from the sampling.

64 (previously presented). The method of claim 34, comprising qualifying for play in the tournament game by tendering a wager.

65 (previously presented). The method of claim 34, comprising qualifying for play in the tournament game by playing the at least one game of chance on the at least one gaming device.

66 (previously presented). The method of claim 65, comprising qualifying for play in the tournament game in response to at least one selected game outcome of the at least one game of chance.

67 (currently amended). The method of claim 34, comprising playing the tournament game of chance at a first permitted rate of play and changing the rate of play to a second permitted rate of play automatically only upon obtaining a winning game outcome of the at least one game of chance.